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RAM SINGH DEL MAYO SCHOOL OF ART LAHORE

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From Objects and Drawings in the South Kensington Museum.

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W. GRIGGS,
HANOVER STREET, PECKHAM,
LONDON, S.E.

The Journal of Indian Art and Industry.

WALL PAINTINGS

FROM THE JAMI' MASJID, FATHPUR SIKRI, NEAR AGRA.

By EDMUND W. SMITH, M.R.A.S.,

Archæological Survey of India, N. W. P. & Oudh Circle.

In continuation of the illustrated articles which appeared in this journal in Vol. VI. pp. 65-68, and Vol. VIII. pp. 41-44, we now publish some more illustrations of the style of coloured decoration used by the Moghul architect in the Faṭhpûr Sîkrî buildings. In the present instance the plates are taken from the Jâmi' Masjid, "the Glory of Faṭhpûr Sîkrî," by far the largest and grandest building in Akbar's summer capital.

The masjid stands on rugged and precipitous ground on the south-west side of the city. Exclusive of the bastions upon the angles, the fabric measures 542 feet from east to west to the outside of the *lîwân*, or sanctuary, and 438 feet from north to south. The general plan adopted by the Muhammadans for their masjids has been followed. In the centre is a large quadrangle open to the sky, measuring 359 feet 10 inches by 438 feet 0 inches, surrounded on the north, south, and east sides by spacious cloisters 38 feet 3 inches in depth, and on the west by the *lîwân* itself, 288 feet 2 inches in length by 65 feet deep.

It is thought to be copied from a masjid at Makka, and was erected in A.D. 1571.

On the north, south, and east sides of the quadrangle are large gates. That on the south, the Baland Darwaza, is the largest and one of the highest (so it is said) gates in the world. It was built towards the close of Akbar's reign, to commemorate his victory over the Dakhan, and possibly replaced another gate designed more in accordance with those on the east and north sides of the courtyard.

On entering the quadrangle one sees on the north side Salîm Chishti's tomb (described in Vol. VIII. pp. 41-44 of this journal), that of his grandson Islam Khan, and the Dargâh or cemetery of the Chishti family. The cloisters surrounding the quadrangle are divided into numerous cells, with open verandahs in front, parted up into bays by stone piers placed opposite the ends of the partition walls separating the cells. The cells are lofty, and were used for attendant *moulvis* and others. They average 10 feet 4 inches and 10 feet 2 inches, and in the walls are recesses for the books and clothes of the occupants.

The *lîwân*, or masjid proper, stands on the west side of the quadrangle. It measures 288 feet 2 inches in length by 65 feet in width, inclusive of the walls, and is crowned by three domes. It is divided into three main portions; a square central-domed chamber, 40 feet 3 inches in diameter, exclusive of the walls, with a pillared hall on each side, 94 feet 10½ inches in length by 62 feet 5 inches in width. At the end of the hall are five chambers, above which are zanâna galleries, reached by staircases formed in the bastions on the outside angles of the masjid. From the galleries the women-folk could follow the services being enacted in the masjid below. The halls or wings on the sides of the domed central chamber are subdivided into three parts, and along the front, facing the *musallah*, or praying area, is a pillared piazza or ambulatory. In the centre of the wing is a chapel, 27 feet 2 inches square, roofed by a dome, carried on extremely beautiful pendentives constructed across the upper angles of the room, converting at the point its square into an octagonal shape. On each side of the chapel is an aisle. Each is divided into three bays in width by three in length, by beautifully wrought and stately columns, modelled after a Hindû pattern. The piazza, or ambulatory, in front of the aisles and chapel, is of the same height as the aisles. Down the centre it is cut into two parts by a row of lofty columns like those in the aisles and of the same height, viz., 28 feet; and along the front it is portioned by eight piers into nine bays. The bays are grouped into threes, one in front of the chapel and one in front of each of the aisles upon the sides of the chapel.

The group in front of the aisles assimilate both in design and size, but are smaller than that in front of the chapel. In each instance the central bay is larger than those upon the sides.

The upper parts are filled in with four central arches in red sandstone supported on moulded brackets projecting from the sides of the columns.

Above the archways is a panelled lintel or breastsummer in buff-coloured stone, which in some cases is inscribed. On one of the lintels is a chronogram to the effect: "This masjid is the duplicate of the holy place," which gives the date A.H. 979, or A.D. 1571.

In the centre of the east façade of the *līwân* is a high portal, which conceals to a great extent a dome behind, covering the principal chamber within. The portal measures 59 feet 3 inches across, and is 70 feet in height to the top of the battlements, or 80 feet if measured to the top of the kiosques crowning the parapet. In the centre is a deeply recessed arched entrance, 34 feet 6 inches in width by 25 feet 6 inches in depth, ceiled by a semi-dome carried on pendentives, the soffit of which is decorated with floral paintings. The decoration, though, is of a tawdry kind and does not call for comment. The archway in front of the entrance or porch is 48 feet in height.

The abutments on the sides of the arch are depicted on Plate 54. As the illustration shows, they are built in red and buff-coloured sandstone intermingled with inlaid bands of marble tracery. Around the arch is a red sandstone band carved with a rich chain fret intermingled with one of leaves, which is carried down on to the plinth in one unbroken face. The architraves are deeply moulded with a bold uncarved lamb's-tongue member in buff stone, a large leaf-carved cyma in red sandstone, and a deeply-cut dentil moulding in buff stone. The spandrils between the transverse beams of the architrave, and the extrados of the arch are veneered in white marble, and projecting from the centres of the spandrils are beautifully-cut leaf bosses in three or four tiers in red sandstone.

Surrounding the architrave (see illustration) is an 18 inch band of red sandstone tracery inlaid in greyish marble, which continues up some little distance above the apex of the arch and encloses three red sandstone panels stretched horizontally across its crown. Enclosing this traceried band is another, a broad one, in buff stone inlaid with a stone border in black marble.

Surmounting the portal is a battlemented parapet. In the outer angles are decorated pentagonal shafts. The plinth is of white marble.

At the back of the porch are three arched openings leading into the principal chamber of the *līwân* behind. The central one is the largest. Each is enclosed by flat architraves of inlaid marble tracery surmounted by inscribed panels. The faces of the piers between the arches, 5 feet 8½ inches in width, are cut up by three oblong-shaped panels in buff stone, placed one above the other, standing on a base of red sandstone tracery (Plate 55) inlaid with white marble. The design of the tracery is geometrical and is most intricate, resembling Arabian and Moorish work. The archways extend the entire thickness of the wall. Originally the soffits, as well as the jambs, were decorated in colour, and although there is ample evidence of this, sufficient of the patterns do not remain to enable reproductions being made.

The chief chamber of the *līwân* measures 40 feet 3 inches square. It is roofed by a dome supported on a base of sixteen sides, carved on an octagonal drum, four sides of which are formed by constructing pendentives across the angles of the chamber.

The chamber is, perhaps, one of the most elaborately decorated in the whole of Northern India, and when in a pristine state, must have presented a most ornate effect. The pendentives cutting off the angles of the rooms, and changing the square into an octagonal shape, are pentagonal in plan. They are covered by half-domes carried on slabs of stone placed across the upper angles of the pentagon. The under sides of the domes are enriched with coloured floral decoration. The pentagonal sides of the pendentives are painted a deep chocolate ground (Plate 56), and upon this are white flowers, intermingled with an open scroll, encased by a border of white worked with a floral pattern in chocolate. At the top and bottom are chocolate bands on which are floral wreaths in white.

The embellishment of the chamber has not been confined entirely to the upper part: the lower is even more elaborately decorated, not a square inch being left unornamented. The lateral walls are pierced by three arched openings leading into the wings on the north and south sides of the room. The sides and soffits of the arches were decorated with floral paintings (see Plates 57, 58, and 59).

Plates 57 and 58 show the nature of the decoration upon the soffits of the arches, whilst Plate 59 illustrates that upon the sides of the piers.

Down the fronts of the piers, panels of flowers were painted, and the arches are enclosed by broad flat bands of inlaid tracery (Plate 60, fig. 1). The pattern, a geometrical one, in red sandstone, is inlaid with white and dark slatish-coloured marbles. Most of the inlaid work in the masjid resembles the geometrical ornamentation so freely used in Arabian and Persian works.

The borders round the central archway belong to the same school, but are not so intricate in design. They are exemplified on fig. 1, Plate 61. Along the top of the arches, and cutting off the square portion of the chamber from the octagonal part, is a deep frieze-band decorated with a rich floral scroll in white (Plate 62),

shaded grey, red and gold, on a deep crimson ground. Over the frieze-band is a moulded cornice. The top member is carved with pellets and lozenges painted a deep crimson and white on a ground of dark French grey. Next to this is a *cymarecta* carved with water-leaves also in dark French grey tipped on the edges with white. Next comes a broad band carved with leaf rosettes encircled with a delicate beaded border painted maroon and lined with white edges.

The interior face of the west wall of the *lîwân* is recessed by numerous *mihrâbs*, in front of which the Musalmân stands when worshipping. One immediately in the centre of the west wall is more ornate than the others, and standing, as it does, immediately in front of the principal doorway, is seen at once on entering the chamber beneath the big dome. Generally the *mihrâbs* in the masjid are very fine, being beautifully carved and enclosed by broad geometrical borders in mottled red sandstone, inlaid with blue and green enamel and white and black marble (Plate 63).

In some instances the architraves are broader at the top than at the sides; and where this is so, a panel is cut out along the top of the architrave and decorated with a scroll in orange edged with white upon a deep crimson ground. In one case, instead of the geometrically carved architrave, we find the *mihrâb* enclosed by a broad border painted a deep blue, and sculptured with verses from the Qurân in raised and gilded Arabic characters.

Much of the colour ornamenting the *lîwân* is very decayed; but, notwithstanding this, one is impressed by its beauty. When fresh from the hands of the carver and decorator, the effect produced by the intermixture of colour with the rich Saracenic tracery must have been charming. As it now stands, it calls forth universal approbation, and causes many to ponder and admire the zeal which actuated Akbar to erect such a lovely shrine for his court to worship in.

For a fuller and more detailed description of the Jâmî' Masjid the reader is referred to Mr. Smith's Report, entitled "The Moghul Architecture of Fatḥpûr Sîkrî," Part IV., published by the Government of India, N.W.P. and Oudh, from which the foregoing Note has been prepared.

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Edwd. W. Smith

54.—Detail of Red Sandstone Jamb of Propylon in the centre of the West Façade.

Fathpûr Sikrî: The Great Masjid.

Inches 12 9 6 3 0 1 2 3 Feet

SCALE OF FEET

Edwd. W. Smith

55—GEOMETRICAL PANEL IN MARBLE AND RED SANDSTONE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF CENTRAL ARCHWAY LEADING INTO THE PRINCIPAL CHAMBER FROM THE PROPYLON.

Fathpûr Sikrî: The Great Masjid.

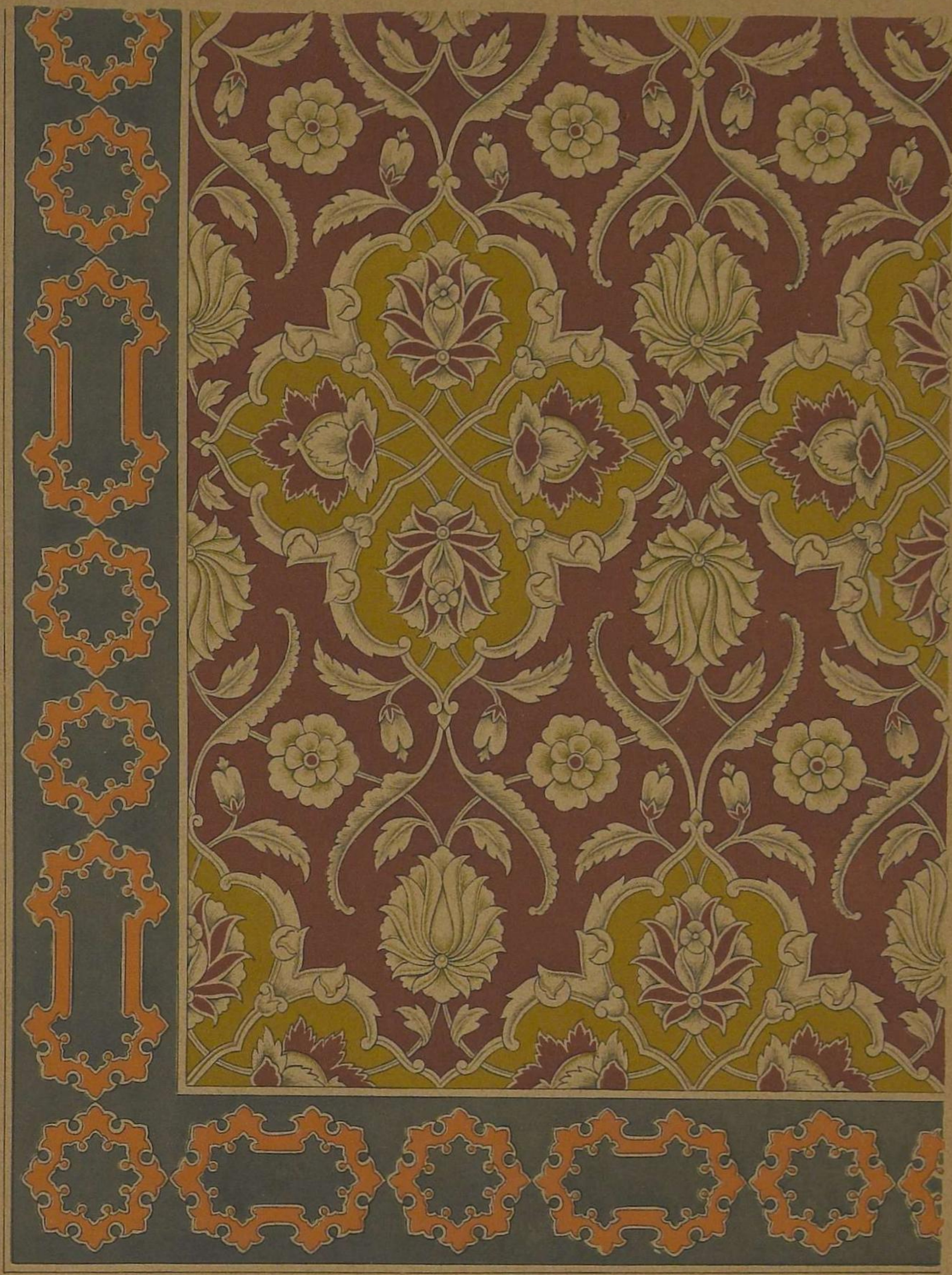
Inches 12 9 6 3 1 2 3 Feet

SCALE OF FEET

Edwd. W. Smith

56.—Coloured Panel under Pendentives supporting the Grand Dome.

Fathpûr Sîkrî: The Great Masjid.



Inches 12 9 6 3 0 1 Foot

SCALE

Edmd. W. Smith

57.—Coloured Decoration upon Soffits of Archways leading from the Principal Chamber to the Wings.

Fathpûr Sîkri: The Great Masjid.

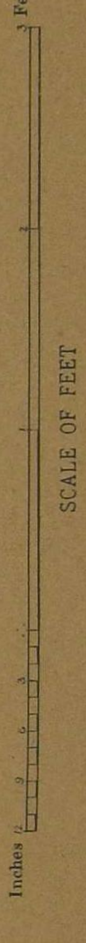
Inches 12 9 6 3 1 Foot

SCALE

Edward W. Smith

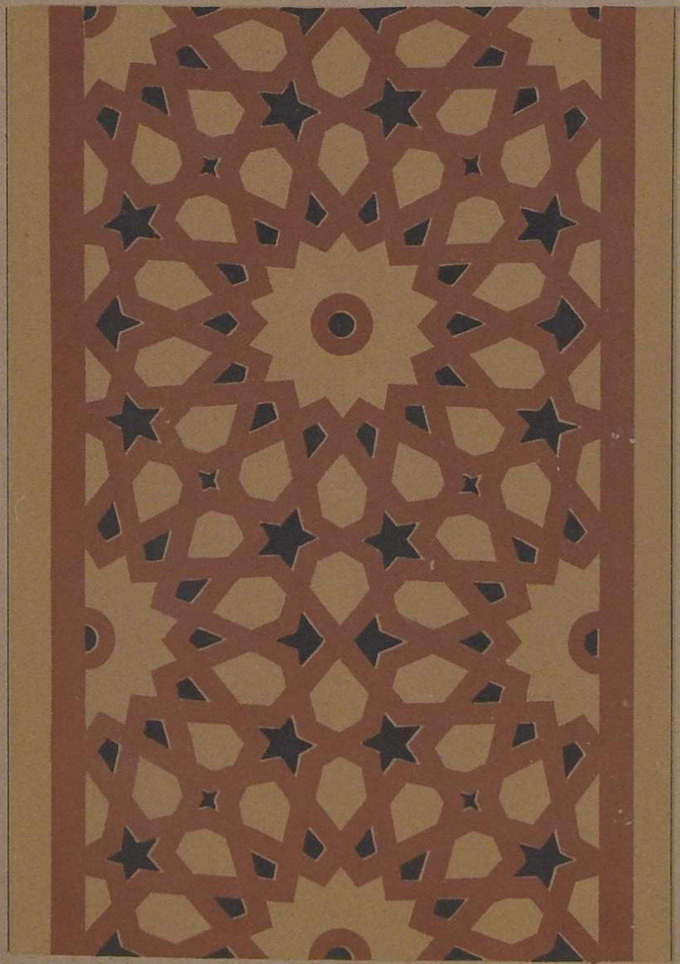
58.—Coloured Decoration upon Soffits of Small Archway leading from the Principal Chamber to the Wings.

Fathpûr Sikrî: The Great Masjid.

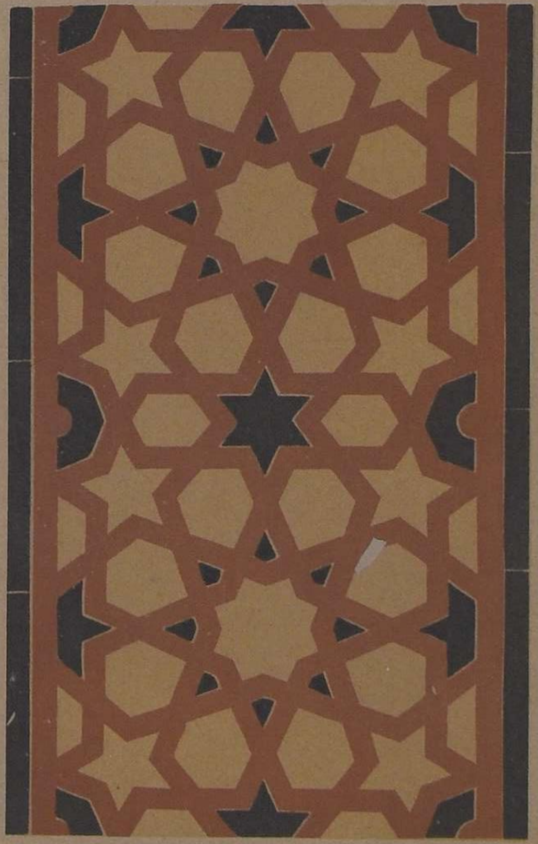


59.—Coloured Decoration on Piers supporting Archways leading into the Aisles from the Principal Chamber.

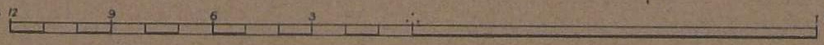
Fathpûr Sîkrî: The Great Masjid.



Inlaid Borders round Side Archways leading from the Principal Chamber to the Aisles.



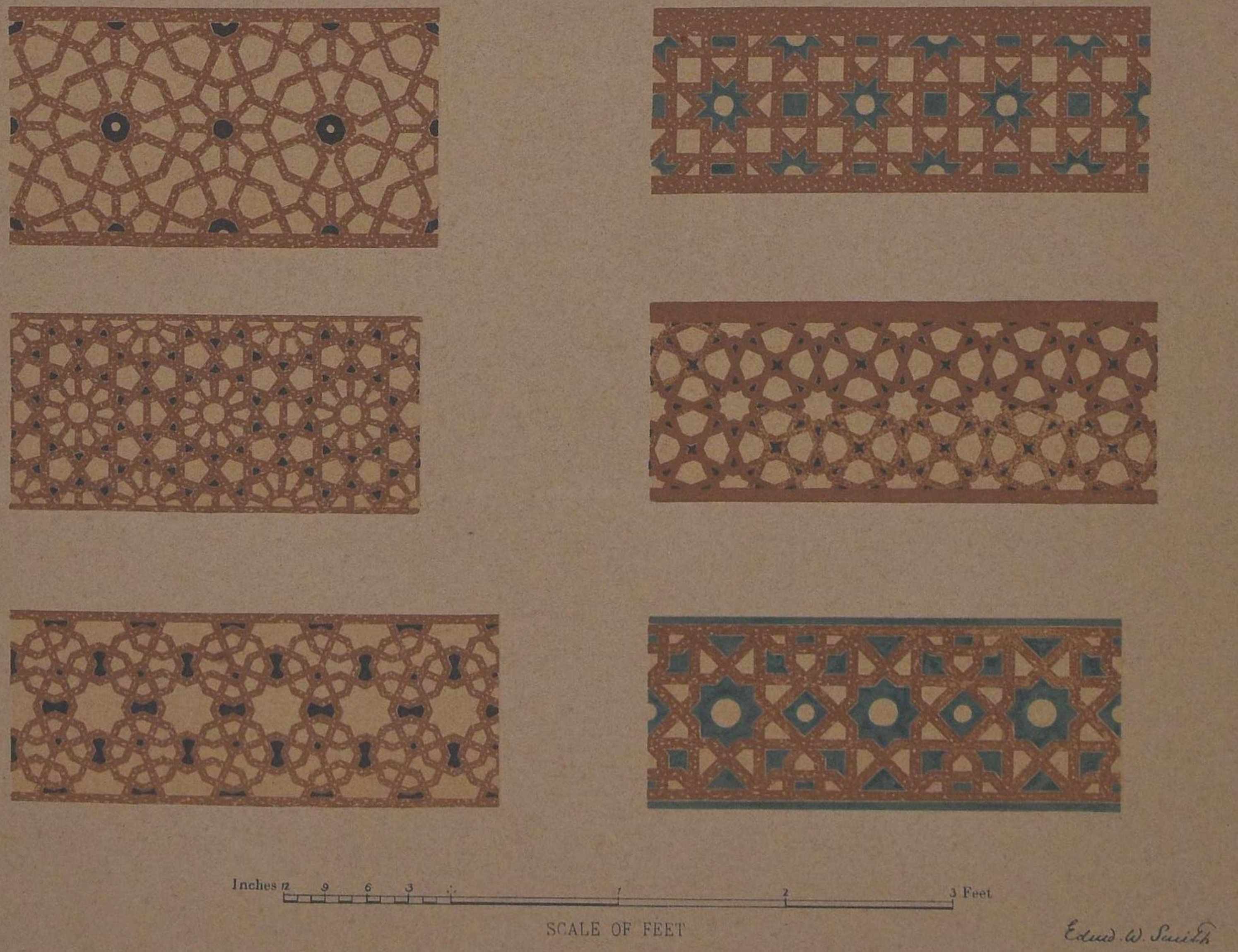
Inlaid Borders around the Principal Mihrab.



SCALE

Edmd. W. Smith

60—Fathpûr Sikri: The Great Masjid.



61.—Details of Inlaid Architraves round Arches, &c., in Principal Chamber.

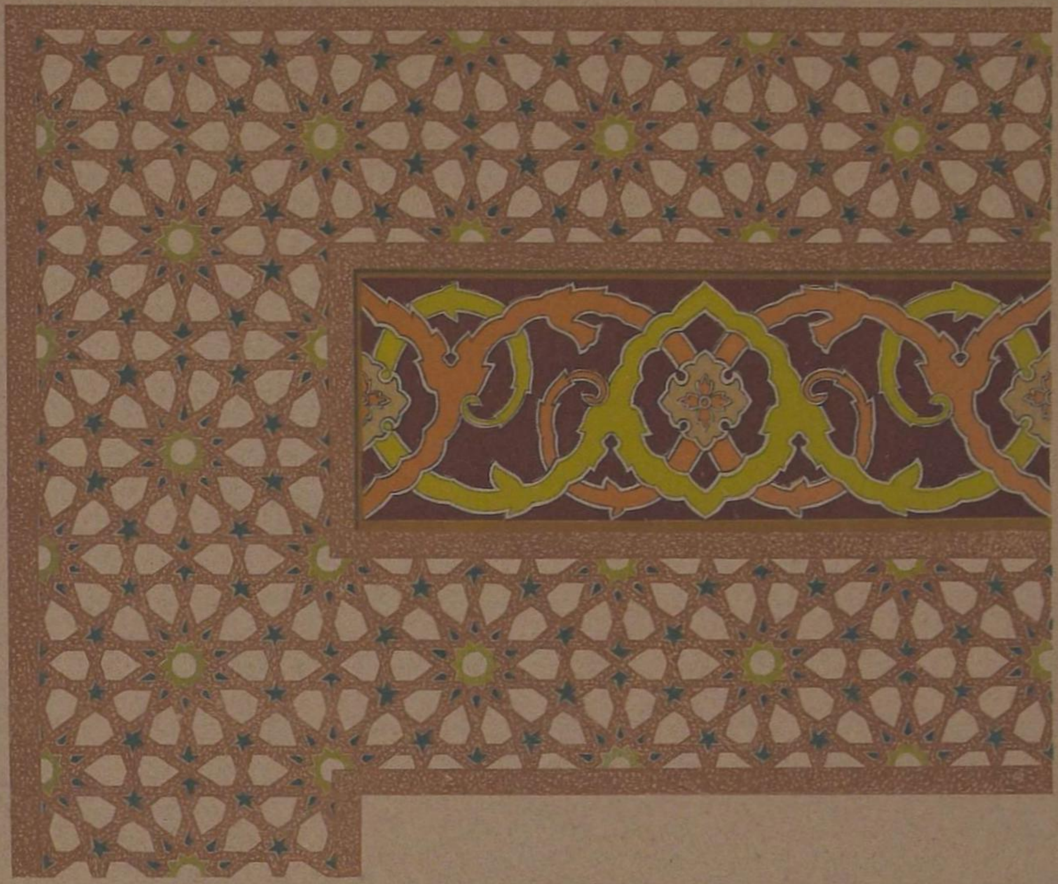
Fathpûr Sikrî: The Great Masjid.

Edmd. W. Smith

62.—CORNICE AND STRING BENEATH THE PENDENTIVES SUPPORTING THE GRAND DOME.

Fathpûr Sîkrî: The Great Masjid.

INLAID BORDERS AROUND MIHRABS ON THE SIDES OF THE CHIEF MIHRAB IN THE PRINCIPAL CHAMBER.



COLOURED DECORATION UPON FRONT FACE OF THE REVEALS.

63—Fathpûr Sikri: The Great Masjid.

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Master Workman at the Armoury, Greenwich

1590.

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The Album contains drawings in ink and colours of suits of armour made by this master for several of the most famous courtiers and soldiers of the reign of Elizabeth.

Amongst these are suits for the Dukes of Finland and Norfolk; the Earls of Leicester, Sussex, Worcester, &c.; Lord Scrope; Sir John Smith, Sir Henry Lee, Sir C. Hatton, &c.

Special interest attaches to this MS., as it formerly belonged to the Harleian Library, and of the suits of armour therein figured some of the finest are still in existence. Of these the following may be mentioned:—Earl of Pembroke, K.G., now at Wilton; George, Earl of Cumberland, at Hothfield; Sir Christopher Hatton, sold last year from the Spitzer collection for £2080; Sir Henry Lee, K.G., Master of the Armoury to Queen Elizabeth and James I., now in the hall of the Armourers' and Braziers' Company; the Earl of Worcester, in the Tower of London.

Although armour in England was, at the time referred to, fast disappearing from use, the suits shown in the work were all of a high class of workmanship and remarkable for their excellence, no less than interesting as the personal and intimate panoply of some of the brightest stars of the golden age of Elizabeth.

It is hoped that the publication of this unique MS. may lead to the identification of other suits and portions of armour still scattered through the country, and as yet not correctly connected with famous names in English history.

The reproductions will be accompanied by a short note on the MS. and brief notices of the individuals for whom the suits were made.

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After the work was commenced, it was found that a large and important collection of photographs in the Imperial Museum at Calcutta was also available, but their introduction has caused delay in issuing the first part. Parts II and III will follow in rapid succession, as the plates have been very nearly all selected and printed.

Part I contains 170 plates, of which 26 illustrate the Bharhut Stûpa; 19, the Sânchi Stûpas; 6, the Sârnâth remains; and 83, the many interesting Gandhâra or Græco-Buddhist sculptures found around Peshâwar. There are, besides, illustrations of Asoka inscriptions, Bhâjâ Cave Temples, Mathura sculptures, &c. The letterpress refers to all published sources of information respecting the different groups of remains, sculptures, &c.

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"The latest issue of the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry* (W. Griggs, Elm House, Hanover Street, Peckham, London) is devoted to Persian and Indian Bookbindings. The explanatory paper is written by Surgeon Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Holbein Hendley, C.I.E., who says the best specimens of bookbinding that are now made in India come from Ulwar, and are doubtless of Persian origin. There are thirteen page-plates of bindings produced with all the care for which Mr. Griggs has established his reputation. Seven of these are from "The Royal and Historical Bindings from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle"; three are from "Memorials of the Jeypore Exhibition"; and three from "Ulwar and its Art Treasures."—*English Mail.*

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